

## Wide Ocean, Big Jacket

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# Wide Ocean, Big Jacket

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## Summary

Fujitaka didn't think to ask Yukito if he'd like to come along on the family camping trip, because when Fujitaka says the word 'family', Yukito's existence is already cradled there.

## Notes

Once again a HUGE thank you to [eternal\\_song](#) for being the greatest beta reader in the universe! I cannot recommend her enough!

The title is taken from the video game Wide Ocean, Big Jacket by Turnfollow, which is also about a family camping trip.

The sappiness goes from zero to one hundred real fast, so brace yourselves!

Yukito doesn't remember the last time he ate dinner alone. This knowledge doesn't surprise him, either. When he unlocks the door to his own house, he feels like he's entering a hotel room. Empty, unfamiliar, and much too quiet. Really, he only ever goes there to sleep—and he only ever sleeps there half of the time.

Even when Touya is busy studying for a test, that's all the more reason for Yukito to come over and keep company in his room. Yukito is usually studying for the same test, anyhow. This way, they can take turns on who brings the snacks, and chastise each other into staying focused.

Then comes their nightly routine. Yukito realizes he forgot his pajamas again, and he borrows a pair of Touya's. Much too big, dangling wide around his ankles. Sometimes, he borrows a too large T-shirt, as well. Then, they settle next to each other on Touya's much too small bed, and fall asleep.

Yukito and Touya used to trade between the bed and a spare futon Touya keeps in his closet. Yukito can't remember when that stopped. It could have been around when he started disappearing, could have been around when Touya gave up his magic to keep him alive. Could have already started happening long before that.

All Yukito knows is that the world only feels out of place when he wakes up alone in his own house, the space around him empty of Touya's breathing.

The thought of eating a meal alone, in his own dining room, is far stranger. Scary, even.

Fujitaka stopped verbally inviting Yukito to dinner, because Yukito was always there for dinner, anyhow. For lunch, as well. Often for breakfast, too. Fujitaka would even send him on grocery runs. Regularly. Yukito doesn't question it, especially not on nights when he is the one making dinner. Well, never *just* him. Touya is always at his side, chopping vegetables and boiling water, as Yukito weaves around him, checking temperatures and giving quick directions.

Tonight is sukiyaki night, one of Yukito's favorites. There's something about a hot pot meal that isn't just a dinner, it's a *family* dinner—something that Yukito is all too happy to be a guest for. That, and the sheer volume of food pleasantly satisfies his double appetite.

Yukito wonders, sometimes, what it would be like to be the one

doing the inviting. He lets his fantasies get the better of him, imagining a home that is his and Touya's. It'd be exactly like this, just this warm and inviting. Only, Yukito wouldn't be a guest. This home would be *his*, in every sense of the word. There would be no cold, empty room to return to at the end of the day. He could lie next to Touya every single night and see him first thing in the morning every day when he wakes up.

Yukito chews on a shiitake mushroom, savoring how the broth absorbed perfectly into it. There's warmth blossoming in his chest, and he can't tell if it's from the food, or the loving family around him, or his fantasy of a family he could call his own. It's all of it at once, and it's overwhelming.

"I have good news," Fujitaka announces.

Sakura perks up, and Touya and Yukito give Fujitaka their full attention.

Fujitaka's eyes gleam in an excited smile.

"I found some time off next weekend, and... we're gonna have a big family camping trip!"

Sakura gasps, and immediately dives into ecstatic chatter about all the things she wants to do on the trip. Will it be near a lake? Sakura's never gone fishing before. Oh, near the ocean? Even better, they can make sand castles on the beach. And, and, and!

Touya huffs. Sakura stops, lip pouting, already expecting whatever he's about to say to annoy her.

"Yeah, I think the little monster's grown too big for our tent. Not sure we can all fit anymore."

For a second, Yukito thinks Sakura's hair might be standing on end.

Oh dear.

"*I'm* the monster?" Sakura fumes. "But you're WAY bigger than me! *You're* the one who's too big for the tent!" She flails her arms around for emphasis.

Like clockwork, Sakura and Touya fall into another one of their bickering sessions.

Yukito chuckles, sipping a glass of water. His eyes travel across the table, and he sees Fujitaka with his chin in his hand, an amused smile directed at his children's antics. Fujitaka glances up and shares a look with Yukito. *What are we going to do with them?*

Yukito chuckles again into his drink, sets it down, then watches how the water ripples when the glass taps onto the table.

Yukito stiffens, then.

Fujitaka's hospitality is unconditional and unending. Yukito can't imagine life without it, especially given that his memories before meeting this family were mostly, if not entirely, constructed. He doesn't know where the construct ends and the truth begins—only that every moment with the Kinomoto family is real.

Every moment with Touya is real. Every lingering gaze, every brush of fingers. Every affirming word of his worth, spoken resolutely from Touya's lips.

Yukito loves Touya, loves this family to the very core of his being.

Yukito knows Sakura is in his corner, cheering him on in his happiness with Touya. Her declaration still rings fondly in his memory, *"If my big brother breaks your heart, call me, and I'll give him a piece of my mind!"*

Yukito is certain that Fujitaka would be nothing but supportive, if Touya returned any of Yukito's affection.

What gives him pause is wondering if this is something Fujitaka expected. Did Fujitaka ever wax poetic about seeing his son married to the perfect wife, having perfect children? Would an invitation to sukiyaki night at a home owned by Yukito and Touya be something that brings him utter happiness and contentment as a father, or would it be something that he accepts and supports, but didn't anticipate for his son?

Anxiety worms into Yukito's chest at the thought. Invents a fear that he is imposing, he is not meant to be here. A fear that he is welcome, but does not belong.

Yukito knows better than to think anything is wrong with the way he feels, or that anything about it makes him an other, but the objective knowledge that he isn't meant to exist doesn't help the general sense of being out of place.

So, Yukito combats the anxiety by grounding himself. His hand reaches out instinctively, finding its way to Touya's shoulder. It's solid, warm, *real*. Yukito eases, fingers smoothing gently against Touya's sleeve.

But then, Touya is glancing at him. Expectantly.

Ah, this read as a social cue, it turns out.

Touya, Sakura, and Fujitaka are now all staring at him, waiting for him to say something.

Yukito's social brain shifts back into gear, and he scrambles to say something natural for the conversation he mostly missed.

"Ah—if you need another tent," Yukito starts. Does he have a tent? He's pretty sure he does. "You can borrow mine." Yeah, a completely natural thing to say and offer. If he actually has a tent, that is. He can always just buy one before next weekend, they don't need to know.

Fujitaka's eyes light up at that. "That's very kind of you, Yukito-san."

Touya's eyes are still on Yukito when he relaxes. They bore into him, knowing all too well there was something else on his mind.

"Um," Yukito continues. He can confide some of his worries to Touya later. "When would be a good time for me to drop it off?"

Fujitaka shakes his head, lifting shirataki noodles to his mouth.

"No need. We'll just grab it when we pick you up."

He says it so casually, like it didn't just shift Yukito's entire world.

*Oh*, is all he can think. That, and the phrase *family camping trip* echoing in his head.

Fujitaka didn't think to ask him if he'd like to come along, because when Fujitaka says the word family, Yukito's existence is already cradled there.

Furthermore, Fujitaka expected Yukito to think of himself that way, too. As family.

Yukito's chest tightens, and he almost has to choke back tears when he replies, "Okay, sounds good."

The next day, Yukito buys a camping tent.

In the passenger seat, Sakura—the triumphant winner of shotgun—has the car window rolled down, her hand gliding across the wind.

In the back seat, Yukito stares with wonder and ease out the window, watching the trees dart by.

He feels breath and warm pressure against his shoulder. It presses down, and short brown hair tickles Yukito's chin.

Yukito glances over and sees that Touya is drifting to sleep, choosing Yukito's shoulder as a pillow.

Yukito thinks he might be the luckiest boy on earth.

When Fujitaka slows the car at the campground, Yukito raises his hand to pat Touya's head, meaning to wake him gently. Instead, he feels a soft sigh against his shoulder, and the slightest press of Touya's hair into his hand. Yukito's heart catches in his throat.

"Wake up, sleepyhead!" Sakura unabashedly calls from the passenger seat, startling Touya awake.

"Geez, you're loud," Touya grouches, lifting his head from Yukito's shoulder to unbuckle his seat belt. Yukito can still feel warmth radiating from where Touya had rested.

"If we left you in the car to sleep, poor Yukito-san would be trapped!" Sakura teases, then hops out of the car. Fujitaka chuckles, turns off the engine, and follows suit.

For a second, Yukito thinks he sees a blush dust the tips of Touya's ears.

"Whatever," Touya concedes, getting out of the car. Yukito hears him call after Sakura, "Don't go running off yet, help Dad get our things!"

"I wasn't *gonna*," Sakura retorts in the distance.

Yukito sits by himself in the car for a moment. Maybe the warmth in his shoulder will stay there just a moment longer, he thinks, if he doesn't move just yet.

The door next to Yukito swings open, and he looks up to see Touya leaning down to his eye level, arm propped on the roof of the car. He's holding his hand out expectantly.

"You coming, Yuki?" Touya asks. He's eyeing Yukito, still on the lookout for potential exhaustion, even though he knows Yukito hasn't had a tired spell from Yue draining him in months. It's hard to tell if he can feel Touya's magic coursing through him, because he's used to being wrapped in Touya's presence. He can definitely feel the change in energy, however, and can never express how grateful he is to no longer be losing expanses of time. He can exist wholly in every moment, and he cherishes that every day.

Yukito wants Touya to have that assurance. That he's fine now, thanks to him. That he is here and more than okay—he is *thriving*.

Yukito gifts Touya the warmest smile he can muster, hoping that even a fraction of his unending gratitude and adoration for this boy shines through. Touya's posture relaxes at the sight.

"Yeah," Yukito affirms, unbuckling his seat belt. He takes Touya's hand and allows him to pull him out of the car. "I'm just happy to be here," Yukito says, chasing away the unspoken worry in Touya's eyes.

The smile Touya returns is small, quick, and burns with solace. When he pulls his hand away from Yukito's, the motion is slow, trailing his fingers across his palm.

The hand reaches up and unceremoniously pinches Yukito's cheek.

"Good," Touya says, punctuating with a tug.

Yukito laughs, lightly shoving Touya away in feign protest.



It's not as if this is the first trip Yukito has accompanied the Kinomoto family on. They've had their fair share of hiking trips together, and days at the beach. If there's a fair or festival in town, Yukito always meets them there, a smile lighting up his face when he sees Touya and the others in a crowd.

The world always feels bigger with the Kinomoto family around.

Yukito understands the concept of time alone being important, but with no birth family of his own, his life is far too saturated with loneliness. He doesn't feel the boundless energy of the world breathing around him when he's on his own. Even a sight as beautiful as this forest would feel suffocating, the empty air around him rendering him smaller and smaller, until he is nothing.

With the Kinomoto family, it's different. Yukito feels that he is a part of the world, because Touya, Sakura, and Fujitaka are leading him by the hand into it.

It's not enough to gaze in wonder at how high the bridge he walks upon rises above the river the adjacent waterfall cascades into. The roaring sound of the current would numb him, were it not accompanied by Touya's steady footsteps at his side, or the rumbling patter of Sakura dashing ahead of them to keep up with her father.

In the sway of Touya's step, his arm brushes against Yukito's in a steady rhythm. Yukito can feel a slight dampness on Touya's bicep, small droplets dot his skin from the mist of the waterfall. Yukito can feel the mist dusting his own skin, and there's something precious in knowing that he is sharing this moment.

It is difficult to mistake a memory as fake when it is shared.

They reach the edge of the bridge, echoing wood giving way to the solid cliff side. Yukito still feels a dizziness in his feet, as if he had just walked on air. He sways a bit too far into Touya's side, but Touya's frame is a sturdy, unflinching brace against gravity.

The roar of the waterfall fades into the crunch of twigs beneath the family's feet, as they journey onward along the trail.

Fujitaka stills in front of them, slowing the rest of the group to a stop.

He puts a finger to his lips, glancing behind to ensure the others follow his lead. The family remains quiet, curious.

Fujitaka turns his gaze ahead and reaches for his binoculars. That's when Yukito notices the sound, softly ringing in measures between the distant rumble of the waterfall, and the rise and fall of Touya's breathing close at his side.

It's a bird's call, and Yukito follows Fujitaka's line of sight to the source of the sound. There's a tiny green dot in a tree not too far ahead of them. He can see its head bob when it chirps, picking at the surrounding branches.

"It's a warbling white-eye," Fujitaka whispers, then carefully hands the binoculars to Sakura behind him. An excited smile lights up her face when she sees it. She hands the binoculars to Touya, and he to Yukito. They move slowly as they pass it between them, cautious not to make any sudden movements or startling sounds.

It's awkward at first, holding the binoculars to his glasses, but Yukito adjusts just fine. It takes a few moments of darting around branches and leaves until his gaze finally settles on the small, bright green creature. The bird is round, its feathers the color of fresh spring grass, with the telltale white circles framing its eyes.

It flies off—not because of any intrusion, but simply because it has somewhere else to be.

"I'm too used to seeing them as pets," Fujitaka comments. "It's nice, seeing one where it's meant to be."

There's an ache in Yukito's chest.

Yukito is impatient at dinner. There is a campfire, fueled with wood and as many dry fallen leaves as they can find, so of course they are having yaki imo.

Which Yukito knows will be a delight to his senses.

But he has to *wait*, and he is *hungry*. Yue is hungry too, of course.

So he sits and waits for his precious roasted sweet potato nestled in foil to cool down. It's silly, but his heart skips a beat when he sees Touya piling more foil wrapped sweet potatoes into the burning coals. Touya anticipates Yukito's need for seconds. And thirds. Maybe fourths.

It's sweet, acknowledging that not a word needs to pass between them for Touya to know what he needs.

Almost as sweet as the delicious yellow flesh of the roasted sweet potato still cooling down before Yukito. He weighs the pros and cons of burning his tongue off, and begins splitting the potato open with a plastic fork to quicken the cooling process. Steam rises from beneath the separated skin, carrying the scent to his nose.

Yukito is pretty certain if he doesn't eat soon, he might *die*.

"Give it another minute," Touya admonishes. Yukito glances up, and sees Touya perched on a folding chair, leaning back from prodding the still cooking potatoes with a stick.

Yukito huffs, cheeks puffing out in annoyance. Touya's eyes twinkle with a fond laugh.

Across from them, Sakura yelps a tiny, pained "eep!" after biting into her roasted sweet potato a moment too soon.

Touya rolls his eyes. "I *just said—*"

"I know! I know!"

Not long after, Fujitaka carries a dozing Sakura to bed. He quietly asks Touya and Yukito to douse the fire before they turn in, and they agree to do so, so Fujitaka retires to his and Sakura's tent.

Touya and Yukito are alone. The embers of the campfire slowly die, heat dissipating into the chill night air.

"You—" Touya starts, then pauses.

Yukito glances up at him, but it's difficult to read his expression in the dark. Unable to guess what Touya is thinking, Yukito tenses.

"You didn't have to buy that tent," Touya breaths out at once. His tone is... disappointed? Bothered? Concerned?

"Oh—I—um—" Yukito falters, caught off guard. "How did you...?"

"The price tag," Touya answers. "You forgot to take it off."

"Ah," Yukito says, defeated. Leave it to Touya, a young man ever observant of the details.

It's been a while since they've had an uncomfortable silence between them, but here it is.

"It's nothing, really," Yukito says, and he hopes Touya can see the reassuring smile he puts on in the dark. "After everything your family has done for me, it's the least I can—"

*"Stop."*

Touya's voice is abrupt, cutting Yukito's excuses short.

Yukito stares, willing his eyes to adjust to the dark to see Touya's face better.

"Yuki," Touya's voice is steady, enunciating each syllable with gravity. Yukito can at least tell that Touya is staring directly at him, brown eyes cutting through the shadows. "You don't owe us a thing. *Ever.*"

Yukito locks his gaze with Touya's, once it comes fully into view, his own eyes having finally adjusted to the evening darkness. He doesn't see a point in arguing with what Touya has said. He knows better than to listen to his own anxieties when Touya challenges them in this tone.

Yukito nods slowly, then looks to the ground sheepishly.

"Sorry," his breath hisses when he says it, mostly chastising himself.

Touya catches that too. "Don't be," he says. "Just—understand you don't need to do things like that."

Yukito nods again. "Okay," he accepts. "Okay."

“Good,” Touya says. There’s that quick, burning smile again. Yukito’s head jolts up when he catches it on the edge of his view.

The kind look on Touya’s face distracts Yukito, so he doesn’t notice Touya’s hand moving until he feels its warmth searing over the top of his own. Yukito feels like something has punched all the breath out of his lungs. His face burns red, and he dares a glance down to see Touya’s hand gently resting atop his—fingers curling in to clasp his fingers.

Touya is so observant; there’s no way he doesn’t hear how Yukito’s breath speeds up.

“Hey,” Touya offers gently, turning Yukito’s palm into his hand in full. Then Touya gets up. He doesn’t let go of Yukito’s hand as he does so—he holds it tighter.

If Touya can’t hear Yukito’s quickened breathing, then surely he can hear how hard his heart is pounding. Surely he can feel the blood pumping hotly in his wrist.

But those kind eyes don’t waver, only stare fondly.

“Walk to the beach with me?” Touya asks. He tugs on Yukito’s hand, encouraging him to stand.

Yukito swallows thickly and nods once more. He stands, with Touya’s palm burning into his.

“Yeah, sounds good.”

The line between the sky and the ocean is a difference in texture, not color. An expanse of stars fading into rippling waves, the same shade of dark slate flowing between them. The beach stretches impossibly wide; the space surrounding them filled only with a light, whipping wind and the comforting rumble of the waves. The sand beneath them would be bright white in the light of day.

Yukito looks over his shoulder and sees his and Touya’s footprints debossing the sand in a trail behind them. Their steps line up, side by side. A quiet joy lights up Yukito’s heart.

“Watch your step,” Touya chides softly. Yukito looks ahead, just in time to overstep a reed before it tangles his foot. He squeezes Touya’s hand in gratitude.

Touya is always, always looking out for him.

They go on like that for a while. Arms lined next to each other, connected at the palm. Swaying together with each step across the expanse of the beach. The wide ocean breathing its tide in and out, in and out. The chill wind kissing their cheeks, tossing their hair.

Yukito shivers, and Touya wordlessly guides them to a nearby log. They sit down, facing the ocean head on. The perfect spot to watch how the stars reflect in the waves.

Touya lets go of his hand, and Yukito’s heart sinks a bit at the loss of warmth.

Then Touya unzips his jacket. It’s much too big for him. He probably assumed he’d keep growing into it when he bought it. His wide shoulders fill it out just fine, but when he unzips it, it’s big enough to wrap them both up, like a blanket.

Touya stretches the jacket out, facing Yukito. An offer.

Yukito’s heart flutters to his throat, and he hopes Touya doesn’t hear the sigh he lets out when he lays his body against Touya’s chest, and feels Touya wrap him in the jacket, and his arms.

The heat of Touya’s chest radiates into him, far stronger than any campfire. Any bonfire. Any forest fire. Yukito feels his body burn into a comforting ember with a tickle against his ears as the only reminder of the chilly wind. Touya buries his face into Yukito’s hair while his hand slides slowly up and down Yukito’s back.

This is everything, everything Yukito could ever want. Touya’s heart is beating against his own, safe in his arms, alive, *real*. The memories of a perfect day with this family are fresh in his mind, still tangible.

So Yukito doesn’t understand why, why on earth, the sickening fear still gnaws within him. The fear that he could disappear at any moment, and the world around him would keep on turning.

It’s not enough to be welcomed. Yukito wants to be needed, wants to belong. To belong to something that is just as much *his*.

Touya must've sensed something. A light shaking. A noise of frustration at the back of Yukito's throat. Fingers clawing into his jacket just a little too tight. Whatever it was, there is always something Yukito gives away, that Touya catches in an instant.

"What's wrong?" Touya whispers, pulling back just enough to look properly at Yukito. Touya's hand moves from Yukito's spine to the back of his neck, soothing his fingers against the base of Yukito's hairline.

Yukito knows he's already on the verge of tears, again. He doesn't think he can hold them back this time. The security of being alone with Touya—never judged in his cherishing gaze, his caring arms. It cracks Yukito open.

"Sometimes, I think I couldn't be any happier," Yukito begins, his voice shaking. The qualifier *sometimes* should be a sign of trouble, but Touya remains quiet. Patient, his eyes ever steady on Yukito.

"But then—" Yukito chokes. He presses on. "Sometimes, I can be... selfish."

*I must be the greediest person on earth, to still want you after you've already given me everything.*

Yukito closes his eyes, tries to steady his breathing. He hates himself for saying it, for even thinking it at all. He will never find another soul on earth as kind and giving as Touya, and here he is still wanting—needing—

"Yuki," Touya pulls him back. Yukito opens his eyes and sees... amusement? Touya's brown eyes are glinting in amusement. Yukito is confused.

"You could stand to be more selfish," Touya states. His hand tangles into Yukito's hair, thumb smoothing against his temple. The other hand slides up to cup his cheek.

Touya must see it. Must see the blush unabashedly staining Yukito's cheeks, the yearning in his heart boiling over. His eyes glancing to Touya's lips.

Yukito feels as if he is in a daze, and searches Touya's eyes for an answer.

Touya sees him; knows him more deeply than he could ever know

himself. Touya gives a quiet nod of permission. Closes his eyes. Inhales a soft, anticipatory breath.

Yukito kisses him. Gently, quickly, anxiety still tugging him back. But he feels it, Touya releasing a deep sigh against his mouth, warm lips pressing back. So Yukito doesn't go far when he pulls back. He sees Touya chasing his lips, inviting him back in. *It's okay*. Yukito lets go and kisses him again. Kisses him the way he's always wanted to. With adoration, with tenderness. A hum of completeness reverberates through him. The kiss tears away the final veil hiding his love, now pointless.

Yukito could kiss him like this forever. He feels Touya letting him. Touya's hands slide from Yukito's head, down his arms, circling his wrists. He gently pulls Yukito's arms up, and around his shoulders, before releasing his hands to rest there. Touya is inviting Yukito to hold him closer; wants him to.

Yukito's heart thunders loud, tightening his throat, beating into his mouth. He has to pull away to breathe.

Touya's lips move to his brow when he does. Then his forehead, then his temple. The top of his head, when Yukito presses his face into Touya's chest. Touya's arms wrap around him again, holding him tight.

Yukito does his best to breathe slowly, in and out. He can hear his own blood pumping in his ears, and how it nearly matches the quickened thumping of Touya's heart.

His mind races to catch up, anxiety not far behind.

He kissed Touya, and Touya let him. Touya kissed him *back*.

Why haven't they been kissing this entire time?

"Why not sooner?" Yukito voices his question into Touya's chest. Touya's hand tangles in his hair again, massaging his scalp.

"You weren't ready," Touya says.

Yukito thinks on this for a moment, thinks it *should* annoy him that Touya decided that for him. But Touya knows him far too well.

It's true. If Touya had kissed him before this moment, his anxiety would have twisted it into an excuse to spiral into doubt. Yukito



would have misinterpreted. A kiss of pity. A fantasy misconstrued for reality. A mistake on Touya's part.

Even now, he can feel unwelcome thoughts edging into him. Telling him he doesn't deserve this, that Touya deserves better. Wouldn't it be such a cruel irony, if he were to disappear in Touya's arms like this? To finally feel ultimate happiness, only to fade away, as if he had never existed. Knowing that Touya is too wonderful, too sturdy to remain broken in his wake. Touya doesn't need him. Yukito is a shell, and his purpose in this world has finished. With Yue at full power, Yukito only holds him back. His life is a burden, taking half of Yue's and giving nothing back. That is an objective truth. No one needs him.

"Yuki?" Touya's voice rings with concern, warm breath against Yukito's hair. Touya ducks his head, caressing Yukito's cheek with a warm kiss. His lips linger, searching for evidence of tears.

Touya has always been tender with Yukito. These new displays of affection are overwhelming, yet familiar at once. The way the yearning in Yukito's heart gives way to searing bliss when he feels Touya's lips on his skin is new. The way Touya melts Yukito's fears with the gentlest of care is an anchoring comfort.

Touya cares about Yukito. Of this, Yukito can be certain.

"Thank you," Yukito's voice croaks. "Thank you for always being so kind to me."

Touya nuzzles his cheek, pecks it with another kiss.

"Of course," he says, matter-of-factly.

Yukito lifts himself from Touya's chest and stares at it for a second, gathering himself. Takes a moment to just breathe, feeling Touya's hand in his hair, the other firm on his back. Yukito's hands grasp Touya's broad shoulders. The slightly rough fabric of his big canvas jacket connects them together. The ocean breathes with him, tide in, tide out. The cold night air is just out of reach, incapable of overpowering the heat radiating between him and Touya.

Yukito looks up, sees the concern in Touya's eyes. He sees something else there too. Burning, unbridled affection.

Yukito blushes. "I... wouldn't mind it," his voice shakes, but he continues. "If you were a little more selfish, too."

It's rare to see Touya confused by something Yukito has said. This was a comment he didn't expect, and his eyes twinkle with curiosity.

"What do you mean?"

Yukito faintly laughs. It's more of a quavering exhale. "You don't always have to wait for me," Yukito says. "I doubt myself, quite a lot." He slides the collar of Touya's jacket between his forefinger and thumb. Yukito appreciates how Touya's eyes are still transfixed on his, patiently absorbing every word. "I don't mind getting a little push, now and then," Yukito concludes.

Yukito knows that Touya's care for him is unconditional and extremely obvious. Yukito still needs Touya to remind him. Otherwise, he would have spilled his heart out to Touya a long time ago.

Touya blinks at him.

"I still don't understand what you're asking me to do?" Touya questions. He's still confused, but ever patient as always.

Yukito realizes he's going to have to spell this out for Touya, and his heart catches in his throat. His hands at Touya's jacket suddenly feel sweaty, and the ocean air against his bare cheeks sharpens to an icy chill.

"You could—you could ask to be my boyfriend," Yukito rushes the words out at once. He has to fight every instinct not to look away from Touya, not to bury his head into Touya's chest in embarrassment. "For example," he finishes with a quiet squeak, face burning red.

Touya looks absolutely bewildered.

Beyond confused, he looks at Yukito like he's an alien from another planet.

Dread plummets in Yukito's stomach. Did he do something wrong? Had he read this incorrectly? Of course he did, of course he should have never hoped for anything more than what he and Touya already had.

It takes a few moments of Touya opening and closing his mouth before he finally speaks.

"Aren't I already?" Touya asks, his tone a touch helpless.

Yukito sits stunned for a moment, then bursts out laughing. It's a full body laugh, erupting from his diaphragm and throwing his head back, arms shaking.

Yukito can hear Touya clucking his tongue in annoyance, can already picture the grumpy frown on his *boyfriend's* stupid face. It makes him laugh even harder.

"I'm serious!" Touya grouses, and the hand in Yukito's hair moves swiftly to pinch his cheek. Yukito keeps giggling, undeterred against the pull.

"You're so silly, To-ya!" Yukito says Touya's name in the special way that he does, parsing out each syllable like it's something treasured. He tries to settle down, wanting to respect that Touya still needs to clarify things. Yukito finally suppresses the giggles, but his eyes are still twinkling with amusement when he settles his gaze back on Touya's frowned expression.

"Didn't I tell you? When I gave up my powers," Touya's gaze drifts off, trying to place himself back in the memory. "I could've *sworn* I told you how I felt."

Yukito remembers every detail of that conversation. As best as he is capable, given that he was nearly dead with exhaustion, and his glasses were off at the time. But he remembers Touya's hand, firm against his cheek, and Touya's voice solid with certainty.

"No, To-ya," Yukito shakes his head. "You asked me to stay by your side. Which wasn't asking anything of me at all, really." Another laugh sneaks through. "I already intended to, regardless of if you felt—if you felt the same way about me." Yukito feels a rush in that confession, the burning in his cheeks returned, and crawling to his ears.

Touya's face has also turned completely red. Yukito can hardly stand how adorable it is.

"To-ya?" Yukito asks, sliding his palm to Touya's cheek. Touya takes Yukito's hands again, then pulls them down, folding them together in their laps.

"Hold on, I..." Touya starts, then sighs. He sounds out of breath from the embarrassment. "I built up the courage to tell you this for *months* and I kept getting interrupted and I *finally* thought I got it through to you—just give me a second."

It surprises Yukito to see Touya like this. Like an elementary school child, summoning the bravery to hand a valentine to his crush. Utterly helpless, doing his absolute best all the same. Yukito wants to smother him in kisses, but knows this is important.

Yukito waits.

Touya closes his eyes, focuses on his breathing. His palms radiate against the tops of Yukito's hands, resting connected in their laps. Yukito sees a faint smile twitch at Touya's lips, and his eyelids sliding open, his expression serene. Sure of himself, having found the words he needs.

Touya lifts their joined hands, cradling them between them, as if in prayer. As if he is swearing an oath.

"I remember when you first came over to my house," Touya starts. His eyes are drowning in Yukito's, despite how he drifts into the memory. "I remember seeing you laugh with my family at the dinner table, how nice you were to Sakura, how relaxed you were around us." His face lights up, an adoring smile directed at Yukito. "I remember talking with you all night, even after we turned the lights off. I didn't want that night to ever end."

Touya pulls Yukito's hands to his lips, kissing each knuckle with reverence. Yukito can't breathe. Can't think. Can only let Touya's words wash over him, drown him with affection that is impossible to be doubtful of ever again.

Touya holds Yukito's hands to his chest, over his heart.

"I was so happy when you said that you wished you could stay at my house every night. I could barely contain my excitement when I told Dad you said that. I'm so grateful that he listened, that he's been granting that wish ever since."

It's too much. The swelling in Yukito's heart is too much for him to hold, wells up in his throat, prickles at his eyes.

Touya presses Yukito's hands tighter against his chest. His expression turns from soft to serious, still burning with the same passion.

"I never once thought to myself, 'I have a crush on Yuki.' I remember *exactly* what I thought—no, what I *knew*," Touya's voice is shaking now, and he leans down, making sure his eyes are leveled

directly in front of Yukito's.

“Yuki is the one I am going to grow old with.’ Those are the exact words that rang in my mind, when I watched you fall asleep. I still feel that way. I will always feel that way,” Touya’s words are sunlight. Too bright, too brilliant.

What else can Yukito do, but cry? He is overflowing, bursting at the seams. The weight of Touya’s love is the law of gravity itself, tethering him to the earth, never letting him drift away.

“It feels—silly, to tell you that I love you,” the blushing school boy has returned in Touya’s flustered expression. “Because I’ve loved you for so long, I don’t even remember when it started. This isn’t *new* to me. It’s a part of who I am.”

Touya is direct. Resolute. He never coats his words, certainly never lies.

To know that he meant every word, that he’d been carrying those words for so long – it’s indescribable, how Yukito’s universe has shifted in the wake.

“How do you do that?” Yukito sobs. The world is buzzing light around him. The ocean is gone, the sand beneath his feet is gone. There’s only Touya’s heartbeat drumming against his palms, and the tears drying on his face as quickly as they fall.

“Every time I think it isn’t possible to love you any more than I already do, you say things like that, and,” Yukito’s voice breaks into a whisper. “I keep falling, more and more. I can’t *stop*.”

“Yuki...”

Now, Yukito hears that Touya is the one whose voice has broken. He looks up, and sees that tears prickling down Touya’s lashes, as well.

Yukito laughs, hiccups through it. “I need to stop crying—so I can kiss you—”

Touya shakes his head.

“I don’t care.”

Touya surges forward, letting go of Yukito’s hands to cradle his

head. Touya kisses over Yukito's sobs, their tears smearing against each other's cheeks. The kiss is desperate, a need to be as close as their bodies will allow. Each gasp for breath is quickly smothered again, a push and pull, waves crashing together. Yukito's glasses fog and nearly get knocked away from his nose. Arms reach out, tugging around each other. Yukito feels Touya's heartbeat reverberate against his own, and it calms him. He slows, drawing his lips away in an unhurried drag.

For once, there isn't a single crease of concern on Touya's brow, when he looks at Yukito.

The dissenting voices of anxiety in Yukito's head are completely silent.

They are simply one with each other, and they couldn't be happier.

It's absolute bliss. Staying on the beach like this, for what feels like hours. Trading kisses, holding each other tight. The warmth between them, in the space of Touya's jacket, makes Yukito feel unaware of where he ends and Touya begins.

They have their heads rested in the crook of each other's necks, breathing deeply, at peace.

The wind picks up, raising the jacket in its current, whipping cold into their little world.

"We should head back to camp," Touya murmurs against Yukito's neck. But he doesn't budge.

Yukito thinks of the night Touya mentioned. Their first night together. How happy he was to have met Touya. Suddenly terrified of the passage of time. It meant nothing to him, when he found himself drifting from place to place, when he was only Yue's shell. With Touya, he doesn't want to miss a single moment.

He understands now that Touya has always felt the same.

"I don't want this night to end," Yukito states. Bares himself, for all his love and all his fear.

Touya turns his head, placing a firm kiss below Yukito's ear.

Then whispers, "It won't. We can hold each other in the tent, as we fall asleep."

Yukito's heart soars.

Yukito, never in his life, wants to wake up alone ever again.

He has woken up next to Touya before, has even woken up tangled in his arms.

But never has he felt this warm, this loved.

Touya has one arm draped over Yukito, the other tucked beneath the pillow they rest their heads on. Yukito has one hand at Touya's hip, the other dead asleep under the side of Touya's torso. It doesn't matter, he could have the arm amputated for all he cares.

Touya is fast asleep, and it's so nice to see his features relaxed. Yukito reaches for his glasses to get a better look.

The sun filters through the fabric of the tent onto Touya's nose, brushes the high points of his cheeks, and dusts across his short brown hair. Yukito raises his free hand from Touya's hip to run through that hair, recalling how he reacted to the gesture in the car just a day ago. It's deliberate, this time, when he draws the easy sigh from Touya's lips. He unconsciously leans his head into Yukito's hand, and the movement is so subtle, Yukito nearly misses it. Even when asleep, this boy captivates Yukito.

Approaching footsteps draw Yukito out of his reverie. He freezes, the hair on the back of his neck stands on end. The footsteps are far too heavy to be Sakura's, meaning it can only be Fujitaka. Would he be okay with this? He knew they'd be sharing a tent, but what of the intimacy? Yukito doesn't want to make Fujitaka uncomfortable, but Touya has his arm pinned, and he can't move quickly enough before the front of the tent unzips.

Yukito's head darts up to Fujitaka at the edge of the tent, a deer in the headlights, excuses dancing and dying on his tongue.

Fujitaka holds no judgment in his eyes, not even a hint of surprise. He smiles warmly, breathing out a soft sigh.

A father who is happy, knowing that his son is loved.

“I didn’t mean to wake you,” Fujitaka whispers apologetically to Yukito. “There’s food whenever you two are ready to come outside.”

Yukito tries getting up with one arm, faltering as the other still lies trapped under Touya.

“I’m sorry—” Yukito starts. The panic still hasn’t left him.

Fujitaka shakes his head, puts up his hand to silence Yukito’s flustered noises.

His eyes and smile are still brimming with gentle warmth and love.

“Sleep in all you like,” he puts the conversation to rest, zipping the tent back up as he quietly stands and leaves.

Yukito overhears Fujitaka whispering to Sakura, asking her to stay quiet until her brother and Yukito properly wake up.

“We wouldn’t want to disturb the lovebirds,” Yukito swears he hears, followed by Sakura’s faint giggle.

An arm reaches up over Yukito’s frame and drags him back down to the sleeping bag.

“Not hungry,” a half asleep Touya grouches into Yukito’s bangs, his breath fogging his glasses.

Yukito chuckles and doesn’t care how his glasses push uncomfortably into his nose when he nuzzles closer.

“You know me,” he whispers with a teasing cadence. “I’m always hungry.” Yukito uses his free hand to poke playfully at Touya’s side.

Touya huffs and still refuses to budge.

Yukito smiles into his shoulder and sighs, closing his eyes.

“Alright, To-ya. You win.”

Just a few more minutes.



Sunday arrives, and Touya doesn't bother competing for shotgun on the drive home.

He plants himself next to Yukito with his head already slotted to the shorter boy's shoulder, fingers laced together.

Sakura turns to look at them from the passenger seat and pouts.

"Next time, I want to sleep on Yukito-san's shoulder!" she whines.

Yukito can feel Touya's smirk shift against the fabric of his shirt.

Touya's eyes snap open, a mischievous glint directed at his sister.

"You already have a boyfriend," he declares. "Stop trying to flirt with mine."

Sakura and Yukito turn the same shade of bright pink. Fujitaka laughs from the driver's seat as he starts the car.

Sakura's hair is standing on end again when she shouts, "Syaoran-kun is *not* my boyfriend!"

Touya chuckles triumphantly, vibrating against Yukito.

"When did I say the brat's name?" he mocks in a sing-song voice.

Sakura turns from pink to crimson, tries twice to voice a retort, then dramatically flips in her seat with an exaggerated "*harrumph*" of annoyance.

Yukito thinks he should feel embarrassed by the exchange, but his heart thunders with delight in his chest.

Everyone knows, and everything is more than fine.

Everything is *wonderful*.

Touya is stuck with a night shift at one of his many part-time jobs. Sakura said she was staying at Tomoyo's house, but Yukito knows that means she's really off on another adventure.

It's fine, because he doesn't mind having a quiet dinner with just him and Fujitaka. It doesn't have to be a big family dinner or get together, in order for Yukito to be welcome.

Selling his house is an option Yukito is starting to give serious consideration.

They're doing the dishes together, waiting for Touya to return home. They've set aside a plate of spaghetti for him.

"I've put some money into your account," Fujitaka announces. Yukito startles, then looks stunned at Fujitaka.

"Why—you don't have to—" Yukito panics, confused.

Fujitaka pulls his hand from the sink to wag a finger at Yukito.

"It's for the tent. I don't want you spending any money on us," Fujitaka lectures. He's using that "chastising dad" tone, usually reserved for when Touya and Sakura's antics get out of hand.

Yukito turns pale, ashamed.

"Did Touya—"

"No. You left the price tag on."

Yukito flinches. Okay, yeah. That mistake is going to keep coming back to bite him, huh?

"I'm sorry," Yukito concedes. He knows they've already forgiven him, but apologizing is still a reflex for him.

The pit of shame is still clamming him up, though. He can't imagine how uncomfortable it must've been for Fujitaka to find out.

Much like his son, Fujitaka is keen in his observations, and quickly senses Yukito's unease.

They remain quiet for a moment, resuming the dishes, before Fujitaka says something that Yukito will remember for the rest of his life.

“I considered adopting you, when you were younger.”

Yukito drops a plate. Thankfully, it only slides with a loud undamaged *thunk* into the sink, rather than shattering across the floor. Yukito swears he hears something shatter in his mind, regardless.

“Touya told me he thought it was strange, that you seemed to live alone, with no guardians to take care of you. It alarmed me to find out, of course,” Fujitaka continues. “You were already over for dinner all the time, anyway, so adopting you just seemed to make sense.”

Yukito remains still, shocked. He can’t be hearing this right, can he?

“But then I saw the way my son looked at you,” Fujitaka smiles fondly at the memory, eyes distant. He then turns to Yukito with a bright chuckle. “I thought to myself, ‘Well, that would make things awkward, wouldn’t it?’”

Yukito wants to laugh with him, but his voice is lodged in his throat. His hands sweat in yellow dish gloves, blood rushing to his ears.

Fujitaka was ready to accept Yukito as his son, all those years ago.

His desire to accept him as a son-in-law was the only thing that stopped him.

This knowledge is too precious; it *hurts*.

“I’m still—” Yukito’s voice catches. He pauses, gives himself time to find the right words. Fujitaka waits patiently for just that.

“You’re still my family, regardless,” Yukito finally allows himself to say. Finally believes this to be the truth.

“Of course,” Fujitaka replies without hesitation. As if it’s the most obvious thing in the world.

Yukito feels like an idiot, for ever believing that it wasn’t.

They don’t say another word of it, quietly resuming the dishes. The choked feeling in Yukito’s throat continues to well up, spilling tears onto his cheeks. Fujitaka doesn’t say a thing.

Fujitaka has known Yukito for a long, long time. He knows the difference between Yukito’s tears of anxiety, and his tears of joy.

After a while, the tears subside into a peaceful bliss. The dishes get dried, and the aprons hung up.

Fujitaka ruffles Yukito's hair with pruned fingers before retiring to the couch.

Yukito is about to settle down in an adjacent chair to watch TV, when he hears the front door unlock.

His feet are already flying down the hall, rushing to meet his boyfriend as he arrives.

Yukito doesn't wait for Touya to remove his jacket, or even toe off his shoes. He's already on him, Touya's face in his hands, peppering soft kisses on his cheeks.

Touya laughs, steadies Yukito's head by bracing a palm against his neck, then swoops down to kiss him firmly on the lips.

Touya rests his forehead against Yukito's, when he pulls back.

"I'm home," he says.

Yukito smiles.

"Welcome home."

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